Share & Advance
2008 QoL Conference

Conference Outbrief

13 March 2008

Community Services I Focus Group

Spokesperson

Joanne Burch

Issue Title: Expand Spouse Education Initiatives

Issue Description: Lack of employment and educational opportunities OCONUS often result in a stagnant academic and professional environment for military spouses. Few opportunities exist to pursue or maintain professional careers. This has a direct impact on remaining current in career fields, maintaining professional licenses, certifications and credentials and on the quality of life for the military family in terms of financial, professional and personal growth.

Community Services I Focus Group
Issue #1

Issue Recommendations:

- Expand the Military Spouse Career Advancement Initiative to OCONUS.
- Expand the number of career fields under this program.
- Expand program eligibility to all ranks.
- Increase number of degree programs offered OCONUS.

Community Services I Focus Group
Issue #2

Issue Title: Postal Service Policy Revisions

Issue Description: Some of the postal services across the EUCOM theater are inefficient and inconsistent. Several locations are inadequately staffed; this impacts hours of operation and does not meet customer needs in today's high OPTEMPO environment. Current hours have a negative impact on people forced to use services during duty hours. Additionally, some facilities do not have the USPS and MPS systems in the same building.

Community Services I Focus Group
Issue #2

Issue Recommendations:

- Extend hours to include evenings and Saturdays.
- Fund to augment manning levels (Spouse Employment).
- Fund to build or remodel consolidated facilities.

Community Services II Focus Group

Spokesperson
Victoria Rivera

Community Services II Focus Group
Issue # 1

Issue Title: Enhance DoDDS-Europe Educators Feedback process

Issue Description: Currently there is no external performance feedback or documentation process for DoDDS teachers. Annual evaluations are internal, performed by the local principal and only provide a one-dimensional perspective.

Community Services II Focus Group
Issue # 1

Issue Recommendation:

Objectives can be achieved through the use of student and parent surveys, ICE, and other external sources to include superintendents and principals from different regions. Recommend external sources provide feedback between internal evaluations.

Issue Title: EUCOM Teen At-Risk Behavior Awareness and Prevention

Issue Description: EUCOM teens are more susceptible to at risk behaviors due to easy accessibility to controlled substances, lack of alternative activities to relieve stress due to frequent, multiple deployments of parents and boredom.

Community Services II Focus Group
Issue # 2

Issue Recommendation: Establish local Teen Action Committee at each installation to empower teens to implement solutions to reduce at risk behaviors. Committee would be composed of teens and would provide them representation at the command level to find the best practices e.g., high school mentoring program for middle school; MOA between command group and teens to identify acceptable behavior; teen sponsored in-processing brief for teens.

Deployment Support Focus Group

Spokesperson

Katie Augsburger

Deployment Support Focus Group
Issue # 1

Issue Title: Standardized Readjustment Time After Deployment

Issue Description: It is critical for the military to provide necessary recovery time to those who return from deployment. Without the necessary attention to this matter we will continue to risk the mental and emotional strength of our returning service members.

Issue Recommendation: Implement a program with a standard calculation applied for readjustment time. This calculation would give one day of readjustment non-chargeable leave for every 30 days the Servicemember is deployed to a combat zone. Command would have the authority to defer the non-chargeable readjustment leave as mission dictates.

Issue Title: Matching Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Contributions for Deployed Service Members

Issue Description: Current incentives for deployed members are restricted to addressing short-term financial benefits. Lack of long-term financial incentives during deployments is adversely affecting service member's morale.

Issue Recommendation: Implement this incentive be in the form of matching TSP contributions not to exceed 5% of service member's base pay while deployed. This incentive will start when the member enters the combat zone exclusion area.

Entitlements Focus Group

Spokesperson
Mike Lemorie

Issue Title: Increase the Per Diem incidental expense rate for deployed or mobilized personnel in a combat zone.

Issue Description: The incidental portion of per diem rate is currently at $3.50 per day and has not been increased in more than 25 years. Personnel serving in forward deployed or convoy missions in a combat zone have an increased need to replace their incidental supplies due to austere conditions. Those troops must stock-up on incidental supplies due to the unavailability of assets while executing their mission. The likelihood of loss or damage to those supplies is also greater.

Issue Recommendation:

- Increase the incidental per diem rate for Servicemembers in the Combat Zone to $7.50.

- Review the incidental rate every three years to maintain sufficient compensation.

Issue Title: Authorize Space Available travel for DoD civilian employees assigned outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) who are on a transportation agreement.

Issue Description: OCONUS DoD employees and their families are not afforded the same opportunity to use Space Available travel as other members of the total force.

Issue Recommendations:

1. Include DoD civilian employees (on a transportation agreement) and their families in current Cat VI for the purpose of traveling in Space Available status while stationed OCONUS.

OR

2. Create Space Available Category VII for DoD Civilian employees (on a transportation agreement) and their families for the purpose of traveling in Space Available status while stationed OCONUS.

Healthcare Focus Group

Spokesperson
Jim George

Issue Title: Centralized DoD-wide Approval and Funding of Medical Travel

Issue Description: Medical travel policy, as defined in the JFTR, is currently interpreted and executed differently across the Services. This results in disparity among Services on approval and funding medical travel for all eligible beneficiaries.

Issue Recommendation:

- Fund all medical travel through Defense Health Program (DHP).
- Designate TRICARE Area Office Europe as the executive agent for approval.

Issue Title: Multimedia Resources to Provide Continuous Effective Health and Dental Care Education

Issue Description: In spite of all efforts by the military medical community and TRICARE, we still have a great deal of myths, misunderstandings and lack of effective communication regarding basic medical and dental healthcare services. This frustrates service members/families and can have a negative impact on morale, ultimately affecting quality of life and readiness.

Issue Recommendation: Use a media format that is most appropriate for the target audience. Include such formats as AFN, Public Service Announcements (PSA), movie trailers, Podcasts, Text messaging, and other new technologies.